

# CONNECTION

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

October 2005

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

DRPT has hit the ground running in the first quarter of FY06. We have made significant progress on moving forward the Rail Enhancement Fund, the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project, CSX rail improvements along the Washington, DC-Richmond Corridor and several studies throughout Virginia. Implementation of our FY06 grant program is also well underway.

We have invested a significant amount of time developing DRPT's Strategic Plan, in accordance with the Commonwealth's new process. The process calls for consolidating strategic, technology and workforce planning and linking them to the state's budget process and long-term objectives of the Council on Virginia's Future. DRPT was one of three agencies requested by the Department of Planning and Budget to make a presentation to the Council on Virginia's Future and comment on the new process.

We are proud of our progress so far, and look forward to a strong second quarter.

Karen J. Rae - Director

## ACCOUNTABILITY

**Strategic Plan:** DRPT's Strategic Plan for the 2006-2008 biennium includes nine service areas that describe what DRPT does for citizens or other agencies. Each service area is tied to an agency goal and includes objectives and performance measures. The plan has a total of nineteen performance measures that will be used to report on the Agency's progress.

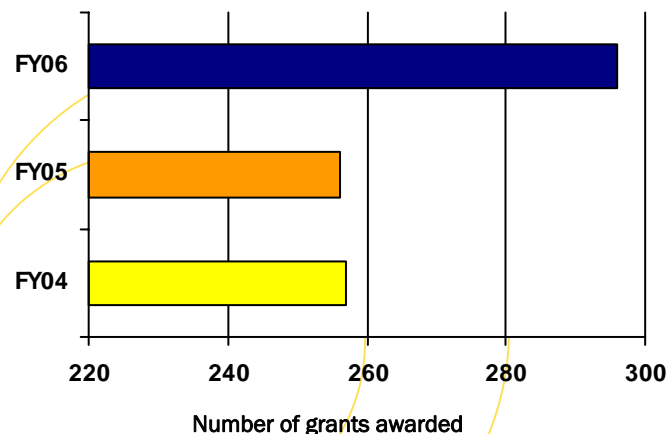
**Virginia Results:** DRPT met or exceeded the target for all of its performance measures (for which data was available as of August 19<sup>th</sup>) in the Governor's 2005 Virginia Results report.

The report measures every agency's performance in delivering core services to customers and stakeholders. Next year, these measures will be replaced by the new performance measures in DRPT's strategic plan.

**Governor's Management Scorecard:** DRPT achieved the highest rating in all applicable categories on the Governor's 2005 Management Scorecard. The scorecard measures every agency's performance in core management functions using twenty objectives in five categories.

## PERFORMANCE

**Expanding Grant Programs:** From FY04 to FY06, DRPT experienced a 15% increase in annual grant awards for rail and public transportation improvements in Virginia. This increase is attributable to the growth in the number of transit systems in the Commonwealth and one-time funding secured in FY06 for the Mass Transit Capital Fund by Governor Warner and the General Assembly.



**Improving Procurement:** DRPT developed vehicle specifications for the Department of General Services (DGS) to use in procuring all lift-equipped vehicles in Virginia. On average, 150 vehicles are purchased annually through the DGS state contract by public transportation and human service transportation providers. Other state agencies and local governments also use the contract.

**Developing New Measures:** As a member of the Transportation and Housing Alliance Steering Committee, DRPT helped to develop a tool to assess the current and future housing and transportation needs for people with disabilities in Virginia. The committee is now working to identify common issues and opportunities for local coordination between housing and transportation agencies.

# THE SMARTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS • October 2005

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

**SAFETEA –LU:** Highlights for rail and public transportation include: rural public transportation systems will receive significantly more formula funding (VA will see a 59% increase in rural funding for FY06); WMATA will receive funding for 52 Metrorail cars to move toward implementation of eight-car train service as part of the Metro Matters initiative; and \$110 million was secured for freight rail improvements along the Heartland Corridor. As soon as federal guidelines are received, DRPT will distribute a fact sheet about key changes and impacts on funding and program administration.



### Fuel Impact:

Many transit providers are feeling the impact of higher fuel prices in the form of greater ridership on their services. For example, WMATA has reported

September ridership figures of 17.1 million, an increase of more than 8 percent or 1.2 million trips compared to last September.

**Rail Advisory Board:** The Board held its first meeting on September 8, 2005. The nine Governor-appointed members will review the first set of applications for funding through the Rail Enhancement Fund in November 2005. The CTB will receive a recommendation to approve these projects for funding by the end of 2005. More information about the members and recent Board meetings is available online at [www.drpt.virginia.gov](http://www.drpt.virginia.gov).

## STATUS OF KEY PROJECTS AND STUDIES

### PROJECTS:

- ♦ **Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project:** See supplement.
- ♦ **Washington, DC/Richmond Corridor:** The Arkendale Crossover Project was completed in August 2005—two months ahead of schedule. Work on the Elmont Crossover Project began in July 2005. A project communications team has been established between DRPT, CSX, VRE and Amtrak to ensure that the public is well informed of these projects and any potential service delays going forward.

### STUDIES:

- ♦ **Richmond/Hampton Roads Passenger Rail:** The Draft EIS is scheduled for completion in early 2006.
- ♦ **Transit Development Plans (TDPs):** New TDPs were initiated for PRTC and the City of Petersburg.

## GRANTS UPDATE

DRPT has implemented the majority of its FY06 program by issuing 177 grants valued at over \$168 million. As of October 1, 2005, the total program includes 806 active grants valued at over \$531 million. Funding is distributed among seventeen separate federal and state programs that provide assistance in ten areas (i.e. capital, operating, technical assistance). The anticipated award of funding through the Rail Enhancement Fund by the end of 2005 will mark the addition of the eighteenth grant program under DRPT management.

**Rail Industrial Access:** A grant was awarded to Wythe County to support track construction for the SVC Manufacturing, Inc. facility, which manufactures and distributes *Gatorade* products. Over 500 annual railcar movements and 166 new jobs are expected from this project.

**New FY06 Rail Preservation Grants:** DRPT has issued \$3,300,000 in rail preservation grants to ten rail recipients as follows: Buckingham Branch – Buckingham, Richmond and Alleghany Divisions; Chesapeake and Albemarle; Commonwealth Railway; Norfolk and Portsmouth Belt Line; Shenandoah Valley; Virginia Southern; Winchester and Western; Eastern Shore Railroad and the Deepwater Terminal.

**New Transit Amenities in Richmond:** GRTC transit system has added bike racks to its entire fleet of 176 transit vehicles and an automated “Trip Planner” to its website to better meet current and potential customer needs.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

**Vehicle Safety:** The Community Transportation Association of Virginia (CTAV) exposition was held in August. DRPT presented updates on vehicle preventative maintenance and procurement procedures, ADA and FTA 5311 and 5310 regulations. CTAV provides training and holds expositions to provide networking opportunities for small urban, rural and human service transportation providers, vendors and insurance companies.

**Operator Safety:** Twenty-one transit providers across the Commonwealth received training from DRPT to help ensure compliance with federal Drug and Alcohol Compliance regulations.

**Rail Safety:** DRPT received a federal FY06 grant of \$60,000 for the Operation Lifesaver grade crossing safety program. During calendar year 2005, training has been provided to date for over 29,400 people and 26,000 informational safety brochures have been distributed to promote grade crossing safety in Virginia.

# DRPT CONNECTION SUPPLEMENT • October 2005

## DULLES CORRIDOR METRORAIL PROJECT UPDATE



The Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project continues to pick up speed. Engineers are working toward completion of 95% of Preliminary Engineering for the first phase of the 23-mile line that will extend Metrorail service from the East Falls Church Metro Station west through Tysons Corner, Reston, Dulles International Airport and Eastern Loudoun County.

### Federal Guidelines Compliance

When Congress approved the federal transportation funding package this summer, the bill included final authorization for the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project and included language to specify that the project could continue forward under the same cost effectiveness guidelines under which it has operated since its inception. This grandfathering was critical to the future of the project. DRPT continues to meet monthly with the FTA team and quarterly with FTA headquarters to ensure that all federal requirements continue to be met as the project advances.

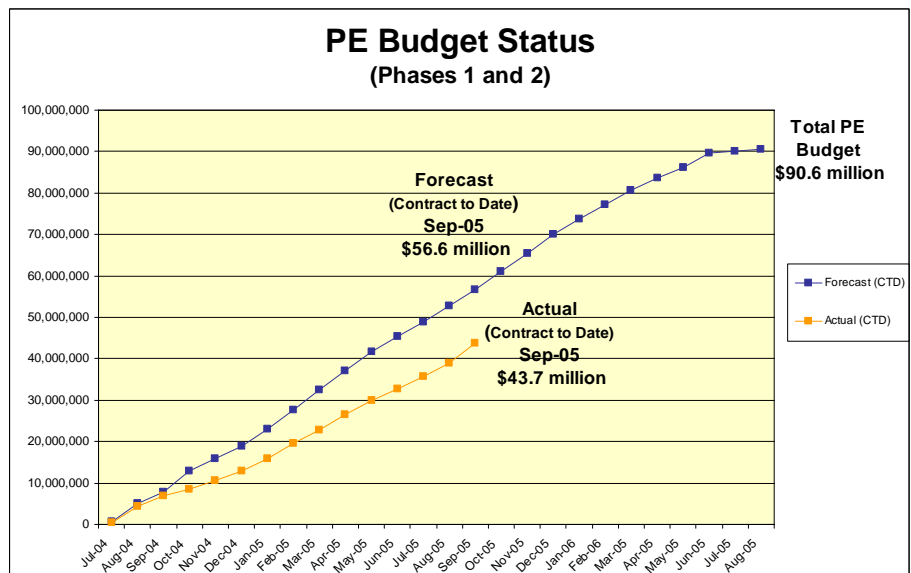
### Cost Reductions

DRPT submitted its annual New Starts program update to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in mid August, including a revised capital cost estimate of \$1.84 billion for the first phase from East Falls Church to Wiehle Avenue on the eastern edge of Reston. That number, based on an independent cost estimate, is \$600 million below the cost estimate that was submitted to DRPT in June by Dulles Transit Partners, the group in charge of project preliminary engineering support under the guidelines of Virginia's Public Private Transportation Act.

Major cost adjustments were achieved by reducing the length and lowering the depth of a tunnel through the highest natural point in Tysons Corner, station redesigns and guideway changes.

For example:

- Reducing the tunnel length and raising a station to the surface produced \$200 million in savings.
- Redesigning the elevated support system in order to use support columns that are simpler in design than those first considered produced \$100 million in savings.
- Working with Dominion Power to develop a more cost-effective power system for the project.
- Right-of-way acquisition increased by \$60 million as a result of current market conditions.



None of these changes have impacted the alignment or anticipated service. DRPT Project Manager Sam Carnaggio, the project staff and partners continue to look for ways to lower costs and a number of suggestions are currently being explored.

### Looking Ahead

The FTA is currently reviewing DRPT's recent New Starts submittal and will begin a project risk assessment on October 31, 2005. Local funding for Phase 1 of the project is secure and revenues are exceeding expectations. Petitions to create the Phase 2 commercial tax district are now being circulated.

Upcoming milestones include the following:

- DRPT will request approval to enter final design in winter 2005.
- DRPT will request a full-funding grant agreement through FTA in spring 2006.
- Construction for Phase I is set to begin in winter 2006.

This schedule is subject to federal funding and approvals.